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# THE WORD AS A SYMBOL OF EXPERIENCE: 'GIRL' IN JAMES JOYCE'S *DUBLINERS* IN A PANCHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

## 1. Introduction

To shed a new light on the old challenge of panchronic description, the present paper will attempt to explore the issue from the cognitive linguistics perspective. On the example of the lexical item 'girl' used in the selected stories of James Joyce's *Dubliners*, it will search for the writer's conceptualizations as regards his personal experience contained in the semantics of the word in question. Yet, before embarking on the core of the issue, the idea of panchronic description, which seems to be a proper mode of analysis of unobservable conceptual events on the basis of observable language behavior, will be briefly outlined.

## 2. Panchrony: old ideas in a new dimension

The notion of panchrony in language is as old as European linguistics. It is de Saussure (1959: 95-6), who has first remarked on the term, classifying it as "general principles, existing independently of concrete facts," such as the constant occurrences of phonetic changes that "have no linguistic value." Hence, the explicit investigation of language phenomena is possible merely by the application of synchronic and diachronic perspective independently, allowing for the linguistic sign to be either arbitrary or motivated, depending on the mode of analysis. Since language, in the Saussurean understanding, is a static system, independent of other areas of cognition, the panchronic perspective the linguist offers cannot be applied to semantic investigation.

A relatively recent framework of cognitive linguistics, where the distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge is vague and virtually impossible to draw, provides us with the opportunity of a panchronic analysis of words wherein it is the speaker's experiential vision of dynamic reality that motivates the semantics of the "arbitrary" lexical items.[1] Yet, it seems that the mode of analysis generally proposed by most cognitivists does not seem to be entirely adequate. Although the cognitive theory attempts to solve the nature of language in opposition to the modular view by linking it with other types of cognition, the panchronic perspective it offers is built on the idea that there is some degree of combination or overlap of synchrony and diachrony. This apparently leads to the study of, respectively, static synchronic state and dynamic diachronic change, which puts time on the clock back to a profoundly Saussurean conception (Łozowski 2008: 51). For this reason, to guarantee a truly panchronic mode of investigation, the main aim of the present paper is to investigate language so that the analysis should not lead again to the division into the static and dynamic modes of language examination. Therefore, the conception adopted here, relies on Łozowski's (2011: 120–3) view wherein panchrony is not identified with language universals, cognitive regularities or omnipresence of history, but rather with language understood merely as a cognitive instrument of human categorization, which undergoes changes. In other words, the idea here is that it is possible to investigate language from the perspective that binds language change to the changes in human understanding of the world. This, in turn, entails that meanings of words are contained in the mind and are unique to members of particular communities as they result from their different personal and socio-cultural experiences as well as their subjective evaluation of the surrounding reality.

Yet, the aforementioned panchronic mode of investigation is only possible if the motivated nature of linguistic signs is accepted. In this view, language may be understood as a set or *inventory* of conventional signs, but conventionality here is not paired with arbitrariness, but with motivation (non-arbitrariness) (Langacker 2008: 1–3). In this way, instead of viewing language as a system of arbitrary signs, it is perceived as a set of motivated signs (i.e., symbols). This standpoint allows for a panchronic investigation beyond the spatio-temporal dimension. Nonetheless, while the connection between language and space-time reality is not questioned here, the paper instead focuses on the cognitive nature of language in the human mind.

[1] However, in this perspective, the cognitive idea of a motivated linguistic sign is built on the relatively old theory of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1958), which is gaining more and more attention in the world of linguistics only now. As Peirce (1958: 102) remarks, there are three elements: an icon, an index and a symbol that to varying proportions are contained within each linguistic sign. In this way, all the language elements are motivated to some degree.

## 3. Encyclopaedic view: linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge

Applying the aforementioned panchronic description, it will be attempted to outline the subjective conceptualizations of Joyce reflected in the meanings of the lexical item 'girl' in the selected stories of *Dubliners*. In accordance with the encyclopedic view, as Evans and Green (2006: 206) claim, the meaning of a word cannot be comprehended independently of our knowledge about the world that directly derives from our socio-cultural and physical experience. Hence, the following section will be concerned with the writer's personal experience set in the context of socio-cultural background that apparently contributed to his way of perceiving reality. Then, the senses of the lexeme 'girl' in the chosen stories will be outlined and compared with dictionary definitions, the aim being to find some differences. Only on the basis of such observable data, some of the writer's conceptualizations will be outlined as regards his subjective vision of reality with reference to women.

### 3.1. Cultural background: Joyce's views on women vis-á-vis the concept of women in Ireland at the turn of 20th century

Reading Joyce's correspondence with Nora Barnacle (*Letters II*), his life companion, as well as the stories of *Dubliners*, it can be noticed that the writer was strongly opposed to the existing social system of values and to tradition.

As May (2008: 557) points out, "a range of marginalized citizens," women included, comprises the main characters in *Dubliners*. Joyce was apparently well aware of the difficult situation of women and never accepted the role that was designed for them by the Irish society, which may be the reason for a strong "feminist undercurrent" in the collection.[2] The writer's sensitivity as regards females and his aversion towards the Irish system of values seem to be confirmed by his attitude towards marriage, religion and the relations between men and women.

In one of his letters to Nora, Joyce writes about their sexual intercourse as the sacrament and he is against social rules that, in his mind, are the direct reason for the lack of "naturalness or honesty" in people's lives. As he points out, people live under the same roof all their life, yet are "as far apart as ever" (*Letters II:* 53). In fact, he married Nora only after 27 years of their life together

[2] As Maddox (1990: xv) points out in her introduction to *Dubliners*, contrary to those accusing Joyce of misogyny, recent feminist critics have noticed the feminist undertone incorporated into the cycle by the writer who allegedly was "confident of its discovery by a future generation which valued women more highly."

merely to secure her rights to inheritance. In general, the writer objected to marriage because he understood it as enslaving women. After his mother's funeral, Joyce, in his letter to Nora, blames the social order, that is obedience to the husband, religion and tradition, rather than cancer for her death (*Letters II:* 48).

In Joyce's times, the cultural image of the 19th century woman as the so called "domestic angel" was carefully cultivated. Yet, the image of a virtuous wife and mother who devotes her life to her husband, children and religion was pictured by Joyce in a totally different perspective, uncovering the hidden side of the social life. In reality, the woman's sacrifice was limited to agreeing to "house imprisonment," with those going out regarded as "having potentially dangerous sexual natures" (Schwarze 2002: 118). Rather than a "domestic angel," admired by her husband, the woman was, in fact, a victim, denied any individuality and passion.

As far as the legal system was concerned, the English Common Law (also in Ireland) did not protect a married woman. While a single woman had some rights, the married one did not have any autonomy. A husband could beat, starve and humiliate his wife without any legal consequences. He was responsible for her behavior and discipline. Although divorces could have been granted at the beginning of the 20th century, the appropriate courts to issue them were in England (Schwarze 2002: 121).

There is thus no doubt that Irish women at the turn of the 20th century were severely abused with no rights to defend themselves. They were discriminated at home if they were married, and downgraded in the eyes of the society if they were single. Due to this experience, Joyce's dynamic vision of reality apparently contributed to his sensitivity towards the situation of women in Ireland.

As the consulted literary sources, Fargnoli and Gillespie (2006) as well as May (2008) indicate, understanding women's difficult situation, Joyce was trying to portray it in his literary works. Yet, this paper does not aim at searching for feminists inclinations in *Dubliners*. Rather, the main aim here is to outline the writer's conceptualizations related to women on the basis of the language used in the collection. To this end, the lexical item 'girl' will be given a contextual examination (both lexicographic and source analysis) in the selected stories of *Dubliners*.

## 3.2. Contextual analysis: lexicographic and source investigation

In general, the following analysis is based on the assumption that language is symbolic and words used by individual speakers provide not only a deep insight into the speaker's mind, but also into his or her personal experience. The lexical material chosen for the analysis comprises the lexical item 'girl' presented in the

following stories of James Joyce's *Dubliners*: *Eveline* (henceforth: story 4), *Two Gallants* (henceforth: story 6), *The Boarding House* (henceforth: story 7) and *The Dead* (henceforth: story 15). The attention will be drawn to the lexical item in question used to denote a young woman.[3]

The analysis of the lexeme 'girl' in the selected stories reveals that the meanings of this lexical item developed in accordance with Joyce's personal experience and observation of reality, diverging from the typical senses presented in dictionary definitions. Seemingly, his experience and observation of the situation of women in Ireland contributed to the meanings of 'girl' that seem to be individual and subjective. To show how the senses in the stories in question diverge from dictionary meanings, it is believed it would be crucial to present the meanings of 'girl' captured in dictionary definitions and only then compare them with the item in the collection. The main source chosen for the lexicographic analysis is the Oxford English Dictionary 2009 (henceforth: OED). In the following examination, the senses that appeared in use in different periods but all were in circulation at least until the end of the 19th century will be outlined. The chosen lexical item is defined by the OED in the following way:

- a female child, commonly applied to all young unmarried women;
- a maid-servant;
- a sweetheart, lady-love. Also (US slang, col.) best girl. Similarly, one's wife;
- a prostitute, a mistress.

Having in mind all the aforementioned meanings, it can be concluded that 'girl,' apart from a female child, might have been used to denote any female person, whether married or single. Moreover, as evidenced by the dictionary, the connotations were negative as well as positive since 'girl,' besides being a prostitute, could have been a sweetheart. At this point, the contextual analysis will take place, the aim being to outline the senses of 'girl' used in the selected narratives.

The first selected story (story 4) describes the life of a young woman who, after her mother's death, takes care of the house and struggles to provide for her siblings and abusive father. Since the duties are beyond her capabilities, she considers an escape with a young sailor who, as she imagines, will marry her. One day, he takes her to see *The Bohemian Girl*, an opera about true, romantic love. After the musical play, Eveline is full of positive feelings as far as her future with Frank is concerned. Yet, on the day of their departure, she shows her inability to leave the destructive father, refusing to join Frank in their elopement to Argentina. What probably prevents Eveline from eloping with Frank is

[3] Naturally, as suggested by an anonymous reviewer, providing other interesting examples of 'girl,' as found for example in *An Encounter* and *A Mother*, would enrich our examination. However, they are not considered here as the semantics of 'girl' is applied there to a female child or a teenager rather than a young woman, which is the main point of our research.

her Catholic sensibility and the promise she had given her mother to keep the home together (Maunder 2007: 144).

Attridge (2004: 7) points out that the female character from *The Bohemian Girl* is the exact opposite of Eveline, while the whole visit to the theatre is to mirror the future life the young woman is dreaming of. The opera, written by an Irishman, accounts for an idealized family-romance relationship, that has nothing to do with reality and merely shows the world of one's dreams. All this seems to be against Joyce's idea of Irish art (cf. *Letters II*). Apparently, the same applies to both female figures. The Bohemian girl represents unreal, idealized image of a romantic and desirous woman. Eveline exemplifies a real Irish woman who is passionless and unable to love. It is the Irish reality that makes it impossible for girls like Eveline to be like the Bohemian girl. As Fargnoli and Gillespie (2006: 53) notice, it is the powerful influence of life in Dublin and the incapacitating fear of the unknown that prevent Eveline from taking any steps to change her hopeless life. When Frank requests the girl to join him, she stands still without any "sign of love or farewell," this also being the sign of her inability to love. Peake (1977: 21) notices that for Eveline marriage does not refer to love but rather to respect she would get from people. Her affection for Frank is not full of passion and commitment. Love is apparently secondary condition in her dreams about their future life.

Guendouzi (2008: 24) observes that Eveline's inability to escape her present life reflects a motif of paralysis. Generally, the motif of paralysis is a metaphor for the incapacity of the Irish people to defeat their "orthodox values" that limit the possibility of bringing into existence individual as well as social freedom. Eveline's story, among others, outlines unfulfilled desires that having been heightened at first, eventually lead to dashing hopes and the feeling of frustration. Joyce's goal here is to emphasize the "unidealized" side of Irish life.

Although the story describes the life of a young female character, the lexical item in question is used only once when referring to her childhood years. Another use of 'girl' appears in the middle of the story, referring to the title of the aforementioned opera about true love, where the word apparently denotes a passionate young woman. Since she chooses the life of a "domestic angel," sacrificing her desires and passions to a family life, Eveline is a total opposition of such a girl. Although unmarried herself, she is a wife due to her lifestyle, imposed on her by society. Evidently, Eveline is not GIRL in the sense of the Bohemian girl due to the fact she acts in accordance with the societal expectations. It can be concluded that GIRL, in Joycean conceptualization, is a young woman who is passionate, romantic and capable of true love, one who is the exact opposite of a "domestic angel."

Another narrative chosen for the present analysis is story 6, which contains a relatively high number of the lexeme in question in comparison with the aforementioned one. As Fargnoli and Gillespie (2006: 56–57) notice, the story

centers around venal activities of two sycophantic young Dubliners, Corley and Lenehan. Having arranged a later meeting with Lenehan, Corley leaves his companion and walks away with a young servant girl, who works in a wealthy house. Lenehan, to kill the time, wanders lethargically around the city, anticipating the meeting with Corley. He can merely afford a modest dinner in a working class eating house, after which he comes back to the more prestigious part of the city and meets his fellows with whom he listlessly exchanges insignificant observations and polite remarks. Finally, Corley comes back in the company of the maid. When he walks the young woman to the door of her employer's house, Lenehan follows them from the distance. Having entered the house, the girl returns soon, handing a small gold coin to Corley.

As observed by Gleed (2011), apart from its monetary significance, the coin has also a symbolic value. Back then, a small gold coin was a "sovereign," that is the British gold coin, a unit of currency in the UK, worth one pound. Considering the yearly earnings of a housemaid that amounted to about four to eight pounds, the coin was worth quite a noticeable sum. What is more, the "sovereign" indirectly might refer to the Irish subjugation towards Great Britain. The exchange between the thief woman and the gigolo apparently signifies the political state of affairs between the English and the Irish wherein the latter "contribute to their own colonial condition" (Gleed: 2011: 43).

The coin might also be regarded as a symbol of the Phoenician culture practicing "hospitable and sacred prostitution." In his letter to Grant Richards (*Letters II:* 84), Joyce emphasizes the influence of Ferrero's works[4] on the composition of story 6. While reference is made there to politics and the code of behavior among soldiers, marginally also the attitude towards women is revealed in the story, importantly for the analysis here. Since the maid might be considered a criminal (Bulson 2006: 43, among others), the inspiration for the maid was apparently taken from *Criminal Woman* (Pappalardo 2011: 159), the work that discusses the issue of "female criminology and prostitution" in the historical context of ancient Phoenicians, commenting on their secular, hospitable and sacred tradition of prostitution.[5]

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[4] Ferrero is the author of *Militaritarismo*, *L'Europa giovane* and the coauthor of *Criminal Woman*, *the Prostitute and Normal Woman,* the works that Joyce was familiar with and apparently took his inspirations from. Joyce was particularly interested in the Phoenician culture in Ferrero's writings since he believed that the Irish nation had Phoenician roots (Pappalardo 2011: 159).

[5] The definition of a hospitable and sacred prostitution is explained on the example of a Babylonian custom requiring women to visit the temple of Venus to sacrifice their bodies to foreigners. They could return home only after receiving coins and inviting strangers to a sexual intercourse outside the temple. The money received was said to be sacred. The authors confirm that Phoenicians also practiced this kind of prostitution by abandoning their virgin daughters to foreigners to show their hospitality (Pappalardo 2011: 159).

Ellmann (1982: 219) argues that the payment of the coin to Corley was inspired by *L'Europa giovane*, where Ferrero exploits one of the episodes from *The Three Musketeers* wherein Porthos uses his upper class status to obtain money from a woman.[6] Yet, it seems tempting to suggest that there is also the idea of hospitality and sacred prostitution in the story which apparently owes a debt to Ferrero's *Criminal Woman*. Corley and the maid go outside the city (analogy to the sexual act outside the temple) to have sexual intercourse. As indicated in the narrative, Corley seems a stranger to the girl. She does not even know his name. In the end, paradoxically enough, it is the girl that pays a "sacred" coin for the service.

Considering the semantics of the lexeme 'girl' in this story, the meaning "slave, implying low-position" is clearly absent from Joyce's conceptualizations. The lexical item in question is never used with reference to the maid since she is apparently the victim here.[7] In Joycean conceptualizations, GIRL is a cunning working woman, looking down on men, frequently bearing male characteristics of strength and roughness, surely never being the weaker sex. As Conboy (1991: 405) notices, the scene in the restaurant depicts Lenehan's subjugate position when the others, working women included, observe him:

> He sat down at an uncovered wooden table opposite two workgirls and a mechanic. A slatternly girl waited on him. […] The mechanic and the two work-girls examined him point by point before resuming their conversation in a subdued voice (*Dubliners*: 38).

The Joycean GIRL used with reference to a working woman is, therefore, considered as the opposite of a calm, gentle young woman dependant on men.

As far as other uses of 'girl' are considered, the word is also used to denote a young and sexually free woman who is never a man's friend. Corley boasts of going out with "girls off the South Circular" (*Dubliners*: 35) while Lenehan walks "with friends and with girls" (*Dubliners*: 39). It seems that GIRL refers

[6] Ehrlich (1997: 90) adds that the connections between the sexual and territorial conquest, as initiated by Ferrero, are evidently visible in the story. Corley, using his higher class position, sexually abuses the maid and makes her steal the money from her employer.

[7] On the contrary, some sources do not consider the maid a victim, but a cunning criminal. Bowen (1996: 140) notices that Corley at the end turns out to be a "sexual suffering servant" sacrificing his body to gain a gold coin. Similarly, Gleed (2011: 43) notices that the maid is a thief who does not deserve compassion. In fact, it has to be admitted that we do not have access to her mind and, hence, can never be sure of her motivation. But, even if the maid is considered as a cunning and violent "criminal woman," the explanation of the lack of 'girl' with reference to her apparently lies in the fact that the narrative is told from the men's perspective who mistakenly think that they are taking advantage of a silly "slavey." However, all in all, it is strongly believed that the maid is rather a silly thief and, therefore, merely parodies the "criminal woman" from Lombroso and Ferrero's work, in the same way as Corley parodies the moral conduct of a soldier.

to a lower-class woman who enjoys sexual independence, yet, is a person men cannot befriend, apparently due to her violent nature.

Apart from this, a wife bearing characteristics of GIRL has nothing to do with real Irish life and might merely be one's fantasy. Lenehan dreams of a comfortable home, where he would "live happily if he could only come across some good simple-minded girl with a little of the ready" (*Dubliners*: 39). Apparently, the lexeme 'girl' is used here because he merely imagines a passionate and desirous wife. Yet, his dream will never come true (Peake 1977: 26) since a married woman cannot be GIRL. Similarly, as in *Eveline*, it is a mere fantasy that has nothing to do with Dublin reality.

In general, the above analysis confirms that Joycean conceptualizations of GIRL are at odds with the senses provided by the OED. On the basis of the analyzed material, it can be ascertained that the word is used to denote a lower-class working woman who is strong and rough, enjoys sexual freedom, but might be dangerous and violent towards men and therefore, does not deserve compassion.

Another text, selected for the analysis (story 7), centers around the issue of marriage and the efforts of Mrs Mooney, the owner of a boarding house, to make one of her guests marry her daughter Polly with whom he became sexually involved. The marriage is the only rescue for them from societal disapproval and contempt "in the eyes of [the] Dublin moral world" (Fargnoli and Gillespie 2006: 60).

Similarly to the previously-mentioned story, it is possible to notice traits of hospitable and sacred prostitution here. As Pappalardo (2011: 168) claims, in accordance with the Phoenician tradition, "the mother looks favorably upon her daughter's sexual encounter." At the beginning, we notice that the mother has no objections to her daughter's flirting with her guests and, therefore, apparently practices Phoenician tradition. Yet, as Johnson (2004: 202) points out, when the opportunity of financial security for her daughter appears, she takes the position of a respectable Irish woman, pretending to glorify ideals of sexual purity, and insists on marriage as the only rescue for Polly. Again, as with Eveline, marriage here has nothing to do with love. Even Mr. Doran, as Peake (1977: 26) notices, considers it as a transaction due to which he will not lose respect and his job.

Ehrlich (1997: 98) admits that Polly cannot be called a total victim since she tacitly cooperates with her mother to get control of Mr. Doran. Yet, mentally she is not a "victor." In 19$^{th}$ century popular fiction, a higher social class seducer used to abuse a working-class woman. Here, a reversal of the roles of men and women can be observed. It is Doran who bears the consequences of the seduction; however, Polly does not take pleasure from her victory. Intuitively, she understands that from now on she has to abandon her present style of life. Allegedly, through marriage she will stop being GIRL.

As Ehrlich (1997: 96) remarks, the daughters are those who "suffer the most from the existing social order." Although Polly is an independent, passionate young woman, she will have to pay for this by becoming a wife. There is no escape for her; she is immobilized by Dublin life, similarly to the other characters in the collection.

This time, unlike in story 4, the word 'girl' is used with reference to the main character, a young woman called Polly. Yet, it can be easily noticed that Polly is different from Eveline. She is a passionate young woman who is full of desire and who calls herself a "naughty girl" (*Dubliners*: 44). She gets satisfaction from a sexual encounter with a man. However, due to societal pressure and expectations, her passion has to be killed as "the girl has to bear the brunt" (*Dubliners*: 45) and become a "domestic angel."

In the light of this short analysis, it can be concluded that the Joycean GIRL is only reserved for young women who do not meet the expectations of the Irish community; that is, are passionate, full of desire and enjoy sexual freedom. When a young Irish woman becomes a wife, she is no longer GIRL in this sense.

The last story intended to outline is the last one in the collection, story 15, which focuses on a dinner event to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany at a Dublin house. The narrative opens with Lily, a caretaker's daughter, who welcomes the guests (Maunder 2007: 106). Although the character is not central to the story, Joyce frequently uses 'girl' in reference to her. For this reason, we shall firstly elaborate on fragments in the story devoted to her.

As Fargnoli and Gillespie (2006: 77) point out, Lily's discussion about the relations between men and women with Gabriel Conroy, one of the guests, reveals her attitude towards marriage, which she views as a severe torment for a woman. Rather than marry, "the girl" (*Dubliners*: 128) prefers working to provide for herself, being independent and free from worries. She is so direct that Gabriel feels agitated after the conversation. What is more, he even admits that he "failed with the girl in the pantry," (*Dubliners*: 129), but blames Her lack of adequate education for the failure rather than his weakness in cross-gender relations.

It might, therefore, be concluded that Lily is not a silly and emotionally weak "slavey" like the maid from story 6, but a young woman who knows what she wants from life. Ehrlich (1997: 96) observes that Lily, a single, lower-class working woman who is hardly educated and socially respected in comparison with Gabriel (and who is exposed to economic and sexual victimization) is "nevertheless more direct in self-expression."

Here, the Joycean GIRL apparently refers to a young unmarried woman who does not seek fulfillment in marriage. Strictly speaking, GIRL signifies an independent young woman able to support herself financially, and strong enough to resist seduction by men.

Another woman who is referred to as 'girl' is Miss Ivors, a young female nationalist from Galway. In her conversation with Gabriel, it is revealed that

she is a fierce patriot who is not afraid of refuting his opinions and making fun of him (Maunder 2007: 106). What is more, having a strong personality, she knows exactly what kind of man she needs: a nationalist who speaks the Irish language and is a sportsman (Ehrlich 1997: 96). Apart from the fact that Miss Ivors is called 'girl,' there is one situation when the narrator is not sure whether he should refer to her as 'girl' or 'woman': "Of course the girl or woman, or whatever she was, was an enthusiast but there was a time for all things" (*Dubliners*: 137). The latter should be anticipated due to her age and societal expectations, yet her character reveals her passion, strength and independence. She behaves in a natural way, expressing her strong nationalist inclinations, but is nonetheless seen as the "comical girl" (*Dubliners*: 141) or the "Ivors girl" (*Dubliners*: 157) by Gabriel. Yet, as evidenced by the consulted literary sources, Peake (1977) as well as Fargnoli and Gillespie (2006), Conroy is a weak man with inadequate political views who is mistakenly convinced about his ability to rightfully assess the situation.

In the main, GIRL here means a free, strong and financially independent young unmarried woman who considers herself a nationalist and knows exactly what she wants in life. Again, the meaning seems to have positive connotations for Joyce, but clashes with the social values of the Irish community.

## 3.3. General remarks

As Maunder (2007: 216) points out, in many stories, the aforementioned ones included, marriage is seen as prostitution. Since prostitution is seen by Joyce as an inherited Phoenician tradition, the present analysis reveals that marriage seen as prostitution is the counterpart of the Phoenician secular prostitution. Hospitable and sacred prostitution is perceived by Joyce as a positive custom, yet one which is downgraded by society. Women who practice such prostitution are not "fallen" to Joyce. The writer knows that such women are not victims, but cunning and strong individuals who do not need compassion since they do not resemble the weaker sex. Hence, Joyce seems to have distinguished between two types of women: "domestic angels" who practiced secular prostitution (hence, WOMEN or WIVES in his conceptualizations) and who deserve sympathy, and cunning, passionate and sexually free "hospitable and sacred prostitutes" (hence, GIRLS in his conceptualizations).

This apparently implies that 'girl' has positive connotations for Joyce, although he uses the word in reference to "angels" that are "fallen" in the eyes of society. Paradoxically as it may seem, it is a socially despised woman, not a wife, that is perceived by the writer to be in a more comfortable position and, therefore, does not need compassion.[8]

[8] This position seems to be confirmed by Joyce's personal attitude towards women. As observed by Ehrlich (1997: 89), it is Stanislaus in his *Dublin Diary* who notices that his brother

## 4. Dictionary vs. human mind: semantics of 'girl' in the OED and *Dubliners*

In general, the chosen lexical item in the selected stories is used to denote a female child, a young unmarried woman and a lady-love. Having analyzed the senses used at the turn of the 20th century, as provided by the OED, the semantics of Joycean 'girl' seems to diverge from the dictionary definitions. In accordance with the aforementioned cognitive framework, this apparently suggest that some meanings seem to be strictly correlated with the writer's personal experience and his view of the world.

At this point, the dictionary senses of 'girl' will be compared with its semantics based on the contextual analysis summarized in the table below:

**Table 1**. The senses of 'girl' in the OED and the stories of *Dubliners* (1993)

| The OED (19th c./20th c.) | *Dubliners* |
|---|---|
| A female child, young unmarried woman; | A female child, young unmarried woman but not a "domestic angel;" |
| Sweetheart, lady-love [any age] […] a wife [in this sense]; | Sweetheart [only a female child] and lady-love but not a "domestic angel," never a wife; |
| A maid, servant – [implies subjugation, low position]; | Working woman – [implies independence from man, strength and roughness]; |
| Prostitute, mistress, lady-love – [implies low status, despised by society]. | Mistress, lady-love – "hospitable and sacred prostitute" [despised by society, approved but never compassioned by Joyce]; "Domestic angel" – "secular prostitute" [approved by society, but disapproved by Joyce]. |

(Own source)

Broadly speaking, in the selected narratives, the lexeme 'girl' is used selectively with reference to young women, and it is never a name of a married woman or one who is a good candidate for a wife. The meaning of the word is based on the lifestyles and social expectations: GIRL refers to a young female who does not act in accordance with the expectations of society. Only a free, passionate, or working woman is GIRL for Joyce. If she works, she is financially independent rather than subjugated. If she is engaged in a sexual relationship

showed consideration for women's difficult situation in his writings, yet in reality was "quite vulgar" towards the women in the streets. Apparently, Joyce's rude behavior was directed towards GIRLS: passionate, cunning and sexually independent young women.

with a man, this implies her independence and freedom, but at the same time makes her dangerous in the eyes of men. Marriage is the only "rescue" to become accepted by society, and yet it is perceived by Joyce as "secular prostitution." Paradoxically enough, the practices of independent and passionate women are "hospitable" and "sacred" for the writer. All this stands in direct opposition to the values set by the Irish society. What the analysis of the use of 'girl' reveals against the background of the socio-cultural tradition in which the author lived is that Joyce created his own system of values. Thus the analysis conducted here has provided some insight into Joyce's conceptualizations.

## 5. Conclusions

The panchronic perspective adopted here has proved to be valuable, providing a tool bridging linguistic with non-linguistic knowledge, obliterating the constrains of synchrony-diachrony dichotomy and shedding light on the unobservable aspects of the human mind through the investigation of language and cultural behavior. For these reasons, it is believed that Saussure's old challenge of a possibly panchronic investigation is reaching a new horizon now, which has to do with motivating the linguistic sign with human conceptualizations. As Tabakowska (2005: 375–6) writes, "*meaning* is equalized with *conceptualization* [… and] comes as a result of a particular *way of seeing things*." It might, therefore, be concluded that human language is motivated by human experience.

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